

# the guardian weekly

April 2012

**Level » Advanced**

**Style » Individual or group activities**



Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: Advanced and Lower Intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from [guardian.co.uk/weekly/](http://guardian.co.uk/weekly/). You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

**Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould**

## African city aims to become world fashion capital



New styles on show in Lagos Emmanuel Arewa/Getty images

### Before reading

**1 Look at the headline, photo and caption. Work in small groups and answer the questions below.**

- a** What is a world fashion capital? Which city now wants to become one?
- b** Which cities do you think are the big four fashion capitals of the world?
- c** What type of events regularly happen in these places?

**2 Vocabulary from the article - abstract nouns**  
Look at the adjectives and write the corresponding nouns. One of the nouns doesn't appear in the article. Which one do you think it is?

#### Adjective

beautiful  
boring  
elegant  
exciting  
glamorous  
successful  
talented

#### Noun

**a**   
**b**   
**c**   
**d**   
**e**   
**f**   
**g**

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## Article

### African city aims to become world fashion capital

- 1 Not so long ago, the idea of an African fashion scene was an optimistic stretch of the imagination. Now, the organisers behind the Arise Africa fashion week believe those days could soon be very last season.
- 2 Inaugurated in Cape Town in 2009, the event this year, which took place last month in Nigeria's vibrant commercial capital, was such a success that organisers plan to make Lagos a major fixture in the global fashion calendar, and take their designs around the world.
- 3 "You've got Milan, London, New York and Paris. Why not Lagos?" organiser Penny McDonald said. "We've been invited to showcase in New York, and to return to Cape Town and other places, but there's such an appetite for fashion in Lagos that we were comfortable with a vision for making this the fifth fashion capital of the world."
- 4 For one week, Lagos was graced with the glamour, excitement and temper tantrums that are an essential part of fashion events.
- 5 Seventy-seven rising African or African-based designers were whittled down to five winners to show at New York fashion week, later this year. Among them was Ozwald Boateng, the youngest and first black man to open a shop in London's exclusive tailoring street Savile Row.
- 6 Entourages were flown in to Lagos on all-expenses paid trips funded by the show's founder Nduka Obaigbena, an ebullient Nigerian media baron nicknamed the Duke. "This is about putting Africa on the map. There is an African brand of style, elegance and beauty," Obaigbena said as he mingled among fashionistas.
- 7 Nigerians don't do things by halves when it comes to fashion, and the shows rivalled the creative

talent found in the more usual global fashion hotspots.

- 8 For designers struggling to break through preconceptions in the European-dominated industry, the week was a chance to shine. "I don't subscribe to the school of thought that there is such a thing as African fashion," said Fatima Garba, whose House of Farrah boutique attracts moneyed crowds in the capital, Abuja. "It's overdone and overplayed. It's always animal prints or tribal or whatever. I want to design clothes that an African lady or a woman in Alaska feels they can wear."
- 9 Nigerian designer Maki Oh's models paraded down the runway in suits whose frills and sheer materials will look at home when she displays on the New York catwalks this coming September. Also chosen to accompany her was South African Gavin Rajah, whose flowing pastel clothes elicited wistful sighs from the audience, and the UK-based Tsemaye Binitie.

**Monica Mark Lagos**

## Glossary

**showcase** (verb) to put on an event which is designed to show the good qualities of a product

**temper tantrum** (noun) a short, sudden period of angry, unreasonable behaviour; often seen in young children

**whittle down** (phrasal verb) to reduce the size or number of something

**ebullient** (adjective) full of energy, confidence and good humour

**media baron** (noun) a person who owns and controls a significant number of TV stations, newspapers etc

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## While reading

### 1 Read and choose the correct answers.

#### 1 The African fashion week organisers plan to:

- a ☐ showcase the new African scene in New York.
- b ☐ repeat this major event in a different city.
- c ☐ add Lagos to the list of global fashion capitals.
- d ☐ make Cape Town a world fashion capital.

#### 2 Five of the most talented designers will have their:

- a ☐ designs displayed in London's Savile Row.
- b ☐ work shown at fashion week in the US.
- c ☐ clothes tailored by Ozwald Boateng.
- d ☐ latest ideas funded by Nduka Obaigbena.

#### 3 Fatima Garba thinks that the concept of African fashion:

- a ☐ may help designers to break preconceptions.
- b ☐ might give some new talent a chance to shine.
- c ☐ can sometimes attract moneyed crowds.
- d ☐ is overdone and doesn't really exist.

### 2 Read the article again. Write in the paragraph numbers where you can find the following information.

- a ☐ An outline of the man behind Arise Africa.
- b ☐ A list of key ingredients of a fashion event.
- c ☐ Descriptions of two winning African designers' clothes.
- d ☐ An indication of the sudden rise of the African fashion scene.
- e ☐ One designer talking about creating clothes with a global appeal.
- f ☐ A description of the creativity of Nigerians.
- g ☐ An introduction to the past of African fashion week.
- h ☐ One person explaining why Lagos makes a good fashion capital.
- i ☐ A mention of a designer who has had success in male fashion.

## After reading

### 1 Whose or who's?

Look at this example of whose from the article.

When do we use whose or who's?

"Also chosen was South African Gavin Rajah, **whose** flowing pastels clothes elicited sighs from the audience." (paragraph 9)

Complete the text below with whose or who's.

Ozwald Boateng is a 45-year-old British designer (a)

parents originally

came from Ghana, and

(b)  become

increasingly involved in African fashion week. He's a

designer (c)  been

chosen to show in New York later this year.

Boateng is a man (d)

famous for creating stylish suits and (e)

shop in

Savile Row, London, sells some of the most

interesting designs in modern tailoring. He's a

designer (f)

famous for his celebrity customers (g)

names include Will

Smith and Keanu Reeves.

### 2 Verbs with the over-

"It's **overdone** or **overplayed**. It's always animal prints or tribal or whatever." (paragraph 8)

Look at the above past participles used as adjectives.

What do they mean? What does the prefix over-mean in general?

Turn the verbs below into past participles. Use them to complete the sentences.

**overpay, overprice, overstaff, overstretch, oversubscribe, overuse**

a The fashion show was completely

so we couldn't get tickets for it.

b The organisers had taken on too much work and they were .

c One model received \$40,000 for the event. Reporters think she's .

d Most of the clothes on display were expensive. They seemed .

e The company employed too many people for the awards ceremony. It was .

f That designer has moved away from tribal prints because they've been .

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## Activity - writing a narrative

This activity is based on the Guardian photo gallery at [bit.ly/africafashion](http://bit.ly/africafashion) which shows the highlights of the Arise Africa fashion week.

- 1 Divide the class into seven groups. Print off and give each group two consecutive images from the gallery.
- 2 Students write a detailed voiceover narration for each picture: eg James is wearing a slim, charcoal-grey jacket - the latest in men's tailoring from Ozwald Boateng.
- 3 One student in each group is the narrator. They practise with the help of their group, paying attention to a clear, lively delivery with appropriate stress and intonation.
- 4 Show the whole gallery to the class. Each narrator does the voiceover for their images. Conduct feedback: Which student is the most talented narrator?



Designer Ozwald Boateng is applauded at his fashion show during the Arise Africa fashion week Sunday Alamba/AP

## Answers

### Before reading

- 1a A city which is a major centre for the fashion industry.  
 b Traditionally London, Milan, New York, Paris.  
 c International fashion weeks, award shows and trade fairs.  
 2a beauty b boredom c elegance d excitement e glamour f success g talent; boredom

### While reading

- 11c2b3d  
 2a6 b4 c9 d1e8 f7g2 h3i5

### After reading

- 1 Whose is a possessive word meaning of whom/of which used in relative clauses and questions. Who's is the contraction of who is or who has.  
 a whose b who's (who has) c who's (who has) d who's (who is) e whose f who's (who is) g whose  
 2 overdone - done too much; overplayed - given too much importance. Over- has the general meaning of too much.  
 a oversubscribed b overstretched c overpaid d overpriced e overstaffed f overused